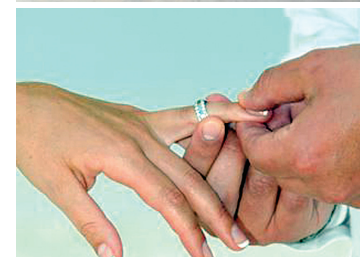


At the Aruba Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino

## Gina & Michael Novia marry on 09-09-09



PALMBEACH – Wednesday, September 9, 2009 was a

special date for many and a popular date for weddings representing long life. On this day, dozens of wedding couples officially exchanged their vows in Aruba. At the Aruba Marriott Resort & Stellaris Casino, Gina de Simone & Michael Novia

united as one as they held their traditional Kunuku wedding ceremony and cocktail event on Marriott's Tradewinds Beach. "To us, 09-09-09 is

such a unique date as it will not occur for another 100 years, that's why we choose for this date", Michael Novia explained.

The newlyweds are loyal visitors to the island and of the Aruba Marriott Resort. Their wedding proposal took place last February on Marriott's beach and a perfect blessing ceremony was held yesterday on September 9, 2009. This special date will contribute to the beautiful memories Gina and Michael cherish for Aruba.

The next significant date will occur on 10-10-2010. Only one lucky couple can reserve this date at the exclusive Aruba Marriott Resort and Stellaris Casino. □

~ Photos by Julia Renfro ~



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# Chillaxation as an art-form on Pure Beach



do this every weekend from 3 to 9 p.m., and sometimes later into the night with the restaurant serving its delicious specialties to patrons still in their bathing suits! □

Palm Beach – Pure Beach at Divi Aruba Phoenix Beach Resort keeps the focus on Chillaxation. Sunday afternoon the DJ spins his cool lounge tunes as the bar

mixes award-winning tropical libations. The water is cool, the sun is hot, and the scene around the beach and pool is sizzling. Sunday is the day to see and be seen at Pure Beach,



Divi's latest attraction in the form of a laid-back, stylish, bar, café and restaurant.

Pure Beach is graced with comfortable lounge chairs on a crescent of pure white sand. The free form giant pool has a swim up bar, with a sunken wing serving cocktails to swimmers in the water and to people-watchers in the lounge, dressed with comfy slip-covered furniture, low tables, and couches, you'd never want to leave.

We caught a bit of the total inactivity and great chillaxation on a recent Sunday visit. Apparently they







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### At Aqua Grill restaurant Aruba's vacation regulars are in the know!



PALM BEACH – Aruba enjoys the highest return guest ratio of any island in the Caribbean. Many of these return guests call Aruba their second home or timeshare here. Want to know where to dine? Just ask one of these loyal Aruba vacationers—many know the best places around as well as any local. Take Elise and Mitchell Pearl—they have been coming to Aruba for the past 17 years—in fact, this is their third visit just this year! They are owners at Marriott's

Aruba Surf Club, and each time they visit, a night at Aqua Grill is an absolute must. The internationally-praised seafood restaurant is known for their fresh-only motto, serving locally-caught fish, and daily trips to the airport bring live Maine lobster and other fresh seafood selections to the table every night. Elise and Mitchell are pictured here enjoying fresh red snapper and black grouper. For that can't-miss seafood meal while on the island, Aqua Grill is located in the heart of Palm Beach, next to Amazonia. □

### Eddison Mora & Robertina Villasmil honored at La Cabana Racquet Club Resort



EAGLE BEACH - Recently at La Cabana Resort vacationers were presented with honorary titles created by the Ministry of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guest visiting Aruba for ten and 20 consecutive years. Special friends of Aruba, enjoying ten or more annual

vacations here, are given the Distinguished Guest certificate and those with twenty consecutive years are awarded the Ambassador of Goodwill title. The recent honoring were effected by the Aruba Tourism Authority associate Ricardo Croes at La Cabana Resort, the resort they call their home away from home. Eddison Mora & Robertina Villasmil were honored as an Distinguished visitor after visiting Aruba for 10 years.

Pictured: Mr. Croes from ATA, Mrs. Debbie Koolman from La Cabana Racquet Club Resort together with Eddison & Robertina. □



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# Quality Tourism = Quality of Life (Part I)

**BY Michelle Winklaar**

The importance of Tourism is often spoken of, but what does it exactly mean for Aruba? This is not news; Revenue from the tourism industry is the motor that drives over 70% of our Economy. Why does a better performing economy provide us with a better quality of life? Because when it is performing better, government generates more tax income and can afford to invest in those things that improve our quality of life, such as better healthcare, better schools, better roads, better police enforcement, and of course more and better paying jobs. More specifically, the industry experts report that for every Afl. 100 paid for

a hotel room, an extra Afl. 400 is pumped into our economy. That is because the average tourist spends 4 x the amount of their room rate on the island in various ways, dinners at restaurants, sightseeing tours, souvenirs, clothing etc. This means that if the average room rate goes down, e.g. the Afl. 100 becomes Afl. 80, then the amount spent on the island also drops proportionately. And the reality is that year to date the island wide room revenue has dropped by more than Afl. 30,000,000.= as compared with 2008. This is a serious decline to our economy estimated at least at Afl. 120,000,000.= year to date 2009. This is why we must focus our efforts on increasing the

quality of tourism instead of discounting and selling cheap. We need to focus our effort in attracting tourists that are willing and able to spend more on the island. This starts with the price of the room. The higher the room rate, the more they will spend. Building more hotels will not have the positive effect we are looking for in our economy because building more hotels means more strain on our already strained infrastructure. More hotels means more people from abroad to build and work in the hotels, more cars on the road, more people requiring AZV and medical care, more tourists, more pollution and more competition for our existing hotels in an already highly competitive market; a sure way to bring down the average price of a room. Our infrastructure simply cannot handle more, so we need to switch the strategy from more hotel rooms to more revenue from existing hotel rooms.

How will we do this? In Part II, I will explain how AVP is planning to solve this issue and improve the Quality of Life for our citizens by obtaining Quality Tourism





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## Don't drink & DRIVE



# Renaissance Marketplace Celebrates The Official Opening Of Cilo Lounge And Restaurant



ORANJESTAD – This past Sunday, the Renaissance Market place had the pleasure to celebrate with a big group of guests the opening of Cilo Restaurant. It was around 8 in the evening that Cilo restaurant officially opened its door to the general public under the sound of the Anacaona band, who were here for the Caribbean Sea Jazz Festival. The celebration went on until

late and the public present enjoyed of a nice ambience and a great restaurant. As the newest establishment located in the Seaport Market Place. Cilo is open from 7 in the morning for breakfast, lunch and dinner with great prices. The décor is of a very modern south beach lounge you can either sit inside or outside watching to watch the sunset. The renaissance

Market Place management would like to congratulate Cilo with its opening. □



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# Ligia & Alfonso Sandino honored at the Renaissance Ocean Suites



ORANJESTAD - Recently at Renaissance Ocean Suites vacationers were presented with honorary titles created by the Ministry of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guest visiting Aruba for ten and 20 consecutive years. Special friends of Aruba, enjoying ten or more annual vacations here, are given the Distinguished Guest certificate and those with twenty consecutive years are awarded the Ambassador of goodwill title. The recent honorings were effected by the Aruba Tourism Authority associate Ricardo Croes at the Renaissance Ocean Suites, where they call "their home away from home." Ligia & Alfonso Sandino were honored as Distinguished Visitor after visiting Aruba for 17 years. Pictured: Linda Garcia from the Renaissance Ocean Suites together with Ligia & Alfonso Sandino. □



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*Louis Vuitton World Series Event In Nice Launches*

# Top Professional Sailing Circuit

*November Event in Nice will Count for 2010 Series Trophy*



ORANESTAD - The Mayor of Nice, the World Sailing Team Association (WSTA) and Louis Vuitton are pleased to announce that the first Louis Vuitton World Series event will be held in Nice, France on the 7- 22 November 2009. The WSTA and Louis Vuitton believe Nice is the ideal venue to launch the Series. Christian Estrosi the Mayor of Nice and President of Nice Côte d'Azur explains: "We are very proud to associate Nice to such prestigious names in the sailing world as Newport and Auckland whilst joining forces with Louis Vuitton to set up such a renowned sailing partnership. With the "Baie des Anges", we offer an exceptional spot

to an exceptional race". The Louis Vuitton World Series, an outgrowth of the successful and highly-competitive Louis Vuitton Pacific Series that took place in Auckland in February earlier this year. The launch of the LVWS is positive news for top-tier professional sailors as it guarantees a global world series aboard high-tech version 5 ACC monohull racing boats. The series will feature a 10-team field competing in shared ACC yachts in a round robin, one-on-one match racing format where the two finalists go head-to-head to determine the winner. Points will be accumulated throughout the series to determine the ranking of the season. The Italian boats

from Malcazone Italiano will be used by WSTA in Nice.

The second Louis Vuitton World Series event is scheduled for March 2010 in Auckland, New Zealand followed by a Series in La Maddalena (Italy) in May 2010.

Organizers are also evaluating interest from other international cities to complete the racing calendar for 2010 and 2011. Bruno Troublé, creator of the Louis Vuitton Cup and LVWS spokesperson, comments: "We have received serious interest from cities like Athens, Greece; Valencia, Spain; Newport, RI, USA; Cape Town, South Africa; Hong Kong, and Abu Dhabi to host future events. "The WSTA and Louis Vuitton will announce more events (2010/2011) during the Nice regatta this year.

The Series, confirmed September 2, is attracting world-class professional teams as well international waterfront cities for hosting future events. Teams confirmed for the first event in Nice include: BMW ORACLE Racing (USA), Emirates. Team New Zealand (NZL), Italia by Joe Fly (ITA), K-Challenge (FRA), Mascalzone Latino (ITA), Swedish Challenge Artemis (SWE), Synergy Russian Sailing Team (RUS) and Team French Spirit (FRA).

Pietro Beccari, Executive Vice President of Louis Vuitton, in charge of Marketing and Communication, notes: "We



only announced the Series last week and already another four teams have expressed interest for the remaining two berths for Nice. We will soon confirm the remaining teams for the LVWS – Nice." K-Challenge, who has helped in establishing Nice as the Host City for the November event, will serve as Host Team in Nice. Stephane Kandler, K-Challenge's CEO: "The Louis Vuitton World Series is the result of hard teamwork between the WSTA teams and Louis Vuitton. We are very proud at K-Challenge to have played a key role in setting up the first event in France with the City of Nice where we will be the Host Team. We look forward making it a real success. This circuit is a new era for our sport." All the LVWS events will be sanctioned by ISAF, the international sailing governing body and will take place over the next two years alongside the America's Cup, but will not compete with the pinnacle of sailing. The format is cost-effective – teams don't have to build boats – accessible, and turnkey for the participants.

Yves Carcelle, Louis Vuitton's

Chairman and CEO, is delighted with this new chapter, which complements but is separate from their 25 year association with the Cup: "In the wake of the Louis Vuitton Pacific Series, which brought a breath of fresh air to the sailing world, this Series will allow, once again, the teams to come together in a competitive but friendly atmosphere." Grant Dalton, CEO of ETNZ and a WSTA founding team explains: "The Louis Vuitton Pacific Series was a great success. It seemed logical to try and build on this and that is what we have done. It is a win-win situation for Louis Vuitton, the teams and the host cities."

Russell Coutts, CEO of BMW ORACLE Racing, a WSTA founding team, explains: "Sailing teams at the top of the sport require sponsorship. Sponsors require an annual global calendar of compelling events. And the sailors seek a highly-competitive series where they can face their toughest opponents on a fair playing field. We see this Series as addressing all of those elements and are excited by the potential." □





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with granite counter tops and a full stainless steel appliance package including washer and dryer. This 35-condominium complex will feature a beautiful swimming pool with a beach style entry with waterfalls and fountain and state of the art fiber optic lighting. The entrance of the building has a drive-up covered entrance and an elegant two-story lobby leading to the sun-filled hallways and corridors. The common area will facilitate the owners with a well-equipped gym overlooking the gardens and the pool.

The garden will feel like an oasis true to the projects name. There will also be a recreation room and sofas throughout the common area to lounge and relax. Further amenities include a 24/7 security, a full concierge and a rental program for the owners who want to earn a return on their investment. The concierge service will be helpful to assist the owners in making their 'homecoming' a very pleasant return. Each condo will have one designated parking space exclusive to the owners.

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The site tour will take you up in the complex where you will enjoy spectacular views of the ocean and beach as well as a wonderful view of Oranjestad where the cruise ships are docked. The views from the rooftop terrace are stunning to say the least. The Oasis sales team is ready to assist you.

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**PALM BEACH** – The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but **Texas de Brazil's** version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, homemade soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, **Texas de Brazil** will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

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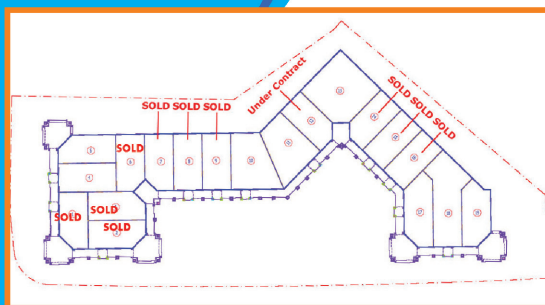


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## Aruba Bankers Association

### Giving A Helping Hand

ORANJESTAD – The Aruba Bankers' Association (ABA) today issued the following release in response to the recent termination of contracts between Valero Refinery and the contractors that were operating in the refinery: The Aruba Bankers' Association recognizes the seriousness of the situation, whereby Valero Refinery terminated the contracts with the contractors that were operating in the refinery. As a consequence a group of people is at risk of losing their jobs. The local banks make a strong appeal on the persons who have been affected by this situation and who have loans with one or more local bank(s) to visit their respective bank(s). The banks are willing to cooperate with the affected persons to do whatever is feasible in each specific case to address the current situation. Each case will be evaluated based on the financial situation of the involved persons. The banks are willing to consider different alternatives that may alleviate the financial burden, for example restructuring of loans or payment of interest only for a certain period. Aruba Bankers' Association also points out the difference with the closure of Lago Refinery in 1985 and the current situation. At that time the banks worked closely with all parties including employees, contractors and businesses that were directly or indirectly involved with the refinery. At that time Lago represented 50% of the GDP whilst presently the refinery represents 12% of the GDP; the impact was much more widespread.

The banks realize that there are other projects in the community that are being worked on but the immediate impact on employees and companies will have to be addressed. In the short term the banks will meet with these companies, the unions, and the central bank to address this serious matter. The Aruba Bankers' Association hopes that the affected persons will be contacting their bank to receive advice and guidance on their financial situation. □

### Draft Kingdom maritime law ready for handling

THE HAGUE--The Second Chamber will shortly be handling the proposed Kingdom Law to regulate the maritime borders between St. Maarten and Saba, and between Curaçao and Bonaire.

Establishing the maritime borders of the territorial waters surrounding the future countries is necessary as a result of the constitutional reform in the Dutch Kingdom, explained Dutch State Secretary of Kingdom Relations Ank Bijleveld-Schouten and Foreign Affairs Minister Maxime Verhagen in the Explanatory Note that accompanied the law proposal.

Parties reached an agreement on the contents of the law proposal during the Political Steering Group meeting on November 26, 2008. The maritime borders between St. Maarten and St. Eustatius and between Curaçao and Bonaire will be arranged through a Kingdom law, similarly to when the maritime borders between the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba were established when the latter island attained country status in 1986.

The new maritime borders signify a delineation of the territorial sea, the connecting zone and the exclusive economic zone. St. Eustatius is not part of the law. According to the Explanatory Note, delineation of the maritime border between St. Maarten and St. Eustatius is not necessary because the territorial sea, the connecting zone and exclusive economic zone of both island territories don't border on each other. This is because of the presence of the French island St. Barths.

Definite end points of maritime areas of the country St. Maarten and the 'public entity' Saba have not been set yet, since there is no agreement yet with France on the border where the end points should meet. Negotiations with France are ongoing to solve this. The maritime borders are relevant to third states and other countries. They have to take into account the borders and the regimes concerning the maintaining, management, exploration or exploitation of natural resources of the sea bottom or the waters above. Under international law, the Dutch Kingdom remains responsible for the entire exclusive economic zone where it comes to conformity of legislation.

The Kingdom law will not involve Aruba, since it doesn't affect that island directly. But because of maritime traffic between Aruba and Curaçao and Bonaire, it is desirable that the Kingdom law is proclaimed in Aruba as well. □



# Justice Minister defends Philipsburg police cells

~ *Work is going on, Jacoba responds to report* ~

PHILIPSBURG--Antillean Justice Minister Magali Jacoba denounced on Tuesday a May report on the Philipsburg police cells, calling it outdated and saying much has changed since Dutch experts visited earlier this year.

“That’s an old report,” said Jacoba, assuring that much had changed with the police cells, which have been attacked before.

Experts Juan de Lange and Professor Paul Vegter said conditions in the detention cells were “still intolerable.” Their April assessment was follow-up to their inspection about seven months before.

They condemned the cells for being cramped and unventilated, and said police management should ensure detainees received medical care and time out from the cells. They also said undocumented residents stayed in cells too long.

The minister countered that renovations had started to

give detainees more space and police were discussing how to arrange for doctors to care for persons in custody. “I don’t think it’s fair to say that there’s nothing going on,” Minister Jacoba insisted.

“They can’t say there’s nothing going on.”

Former justice minister David Dick received three million guilders from Dutch funding agency USONA in August to complete construction of cells behind the police station. He signed the agreement on his last day in office. Work started about one week later.

The experts’ report said the Pointe Blanche House of Detention was in good shape despite being short on money. Jacoba said her ministry was working on a complete renovation of the prison while management drafted a “new day programme.”

“It’s going well,” she said of the project.

She said Dutch experts should be careful when assessing

detention centres in the scale was very different. “It’s people in the Netherlands,” Netherlands Antilles as the not the same as the 16 million she said. □

## Goedgedrag: Let’s not be our greatest enemy

~ *Says 10-10-10 can still be achieved* ~

WILLEMSTAD--Governor Frits Goedgedrag says the target date of October 10, 2010, for Curaçao and St. Maarten to attain new constitutional statuses is still attainable and should not be hindered by Parliamentary elections in January.

Goedgedrag made his comments at the opening of the new Parliamentary year Tuesday.

“All legislation requires careful assessment and treatment.

The dismantling of the country and the transfer of functions and powers to the new entities should continue unabated. Your support and confidence for the success of the necessary reforms is essential,” he said.

He told parliamentarians they each had an important role to play and fulfil “in the last years of existence of the Netherlands Antilles” in terms of shaping the legislation to ensure a smooth transfer from the Antillean constellation to individual island nations.

The governor also said no new policies

and/or laws should be tabled unless it was unavoidable, and that government’s primary role of care for its citizens should always take priority.

Goedgedrag also had a message to the people. “The campaign preceding the referendum and even beyond has seen noticeable tension in Curaçao. The main thing is to realise that political discussion in society is a healthy thing and can lead to greater involvement of citizens in political decisions,” he said.

“But that debate should be respectful of everyone’s opinion being conducted. Divisions cannot last and must end. Continuing strife will weaken us. We can achieve much, but discord could be our greatest weakness. Let us ensure that we are not our greatest enemy.”

The Governor also devoted parts of his speech to youth crime and government initiatives to combat it, health-related issues, the aviation and Met services and the importance of detailed discussions to facilitate the transfer of both to the island entities. □

# Booi, Elhage homes raided in drug, money-laundering probe

~ *Colombian cartel links suspected* ~

BONAIRE--The homes of opposition UPB leader Ramoncito Booi and UPB member Burney Elhage were raided by Dutch detectives Tuesday morning in connection with an investigation into money-laundering, gold-smuggling, real estate fraud and international drug trafficking.

Elhage’s office at Bonaire’s Flamingo Airport also was searched and equipment was seized as possible evidence in the case.

Authorities in Holland and the Netherlands Antilles also arrested five suspects on Tuesday, including two women who are believed to be involved. The raids in Holland yielded three firearms, including a Kalashnikov assault rifle, ammunition, computers, mobile phones, three cars and a large number of records that will be carefully reviewed.

The Prosecutor’s Office of the Netherlands Antilles is coordinating the investigation and described the motives for the raids as “presumptions of fraud-related offences committed by people within the public administration in Bonaire.” These offences were discovered during a major year-long money-laundering investigation in the Antilles and in Europe.

Within the scope of this coordinated international criminal investigation, confiscations took place at a number of locations in Curaçao, Bonaire and Aruba, and in several European countries, including Holland, Belgium and Austria.

The Prosecutor’s Office in Holland also disclosed

that the main suspect in the investigation, a 39-year-old Dutchman W.V.W., had been arrested in Bonaire Tuesday morning. He was suspected of having been on his way to South America to regulate another drug shipment to Holland via West Africa. He will be extradited to Holland.

Some 18 searches were conducted in Bonaire: eight homes, four government agencies and six company premises. Two arrests took place in Bonaire. Searches of two homes and one commercial property took place in Curaçao and one person was arrested there. One arrest was made and searches took place at four homes in Aruba.

The Prosecutor’s Office said the investigation was far from over and would not be limited to the Netherlands Antilles, Aruba and Europe. More house searches and arrests were not excluded.

While investigating the money-laundering practices, a large-scale gold-smuggling ring via Aruba and the Netherlands Antilles was uncovered. This gold-smuggling is related to a March 27 arrest in the US. The detained person is suspected of large-scale drug trafficking of cocaine out of Colombia. More than eight billion dollars had gone through the US accounts this person was managing.

A separate but related investigation and subsequent raid in April discovered almost 4.5 million dollars in a safe house in Holland. Authorities suspect this money was for a narcotic shipment coming from West Africa via Colombia, using Colombian cartel

connections for shipments of more than 2,000 pounds. Ramonsito Booi is in the United States with his son. When reached via phone by Amigoe newspaper, he said he had heard of the raid, but was not aware of the reason. “I cannot reach my wife,” Amigoe reported Booi as saying. “Maybe she’s been told not to answer the phone.”

No indication was given whether he would return to Bonaire.

Burney Elhage could not be reached by phone.

Local media in Bonaire also reported that a Cessna airplane at Flamingo Airport had been confiscated.

The criminal investigation is being conducted by the Kingdom Detective Cooperation Team RST, a team of cooperating Netherlands, Netherlands Antilles and Aruba detectives, in cooperation with the Curaçao Police Force KPC, Bonaire Police Force KPB, Aruba Police Force KPA, Customs Services of the Netherlands Antilles and of Aruba, Coast Guard of the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, and a number of foreign investigation services.

The international coalition parties to this investigation are American Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), federal judicial police of Belgium, German Bundes Kriminal Ambt and Austrian Bundes Kriminal Polizei.

The alleged actions of a number of the individuals mentioned were described vividly in the famous Black Book Bonaire prepared by Fundashon Bon Gobernashon Boneiru. □



# Atacho elected president of 'independent' parliament

~ New parliamentary year started Tuesday ~

**W I L L E M S T A D** - - Parliamentarian Pedro Atacho (PAR) was elected president of the first independent parliament of the Netherlands Antilles on Monday. Parliamentarian Ray Hassell of Saba was elected vice-president.

Parliamentarians voted for the first time ever in the 50-plus-year history of the legislative body to appoint their president and vice president. This was made possible by the adoption of a law earlier this year that severed Parliament's financial and administrative ties to the Central Government.

The body is now in control of its finances and was able to vote in its heads for the first time. Also for the first time, the president of parliament, not the Governor of the Netherlands Antilles, will declare the new parliamentary year - 2009-2010 - open today, Tuesday. Governor Frits Goedgedrag will give the customary speech about the Central Government's plans for the coming year, while Atacho will outline the goals and challenges for the legislature in this final year of its four-year term. Elections for a new parliament are set for January 22.

Atacho told the press in St. Maarten via teleconference Monday that the 2008-2009 parliamentary year had been "remarkable and historical in our parliamentary democracy."

He said parliament becoming independent was the most important achievement of the past year. "I feel honoured to have been chosen as president by the members of parliament. We (Atacho and Hassell) will try to the best of our abilities to direct the highest legislative body of the country. We will continue to serve our communities and the Members of Parliament."

The new parliamentary year has its own challenges and goals. The handling of the consensus Kingdom laws and amendments to the Kingdom Charter in the dismantling process are of "major importance." The discussion on the 2010 budget of the Central Government is also a priority for Parliament.

Another goal in the new parliamentary year is to assist Curaçao and St. Maarten with the setting up of the secretariats-general of their new Parliaments as is required.

"The reduction of the list of law proposals will continue to be a priority in the new parliamentary year," Atacho said.

## Parliament report card

Recapping the activities for the past year, Atacho, who also served as president for that term, said the number of meetings held was comparative to the 2007-2008 year. Nineteen public meetings

and 58 Central Committee meetings were held, and 27 bills were passed.

Parliament presented 24 interim and final reports. A total of 93 bills were debated and 36 finalised, exceeding the numbers of the previous year.

A total of 57 bills are pending approval in the new parliamentary year that starts today. Of these laws, more than half deal with the financial guarantees of government given in the past and law proposals pending

## Curacao and St. Maarten to separate

As of October 10 next year, Curacao and St. Maarten are expected to have separate status making them countries within the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The process of the break-up of the territory was advanced on Monday when the parliament in Curacao appointed former president of the Netherlands Antilles, Senator Pedro Attacho as the interim chairman of the organisation.

The senator said the territory's constitution was changed recently to make the legislative branch of government- parliament, independent from the executive branch.

"This constituted a major change in our parliamentary system because based on the changed articles of this ordinance 55 for 56. Parliament is now legally entitled to close and open the parliamentary session instead of this being done by the governor of the Lesser Antilles. Also as a result of these changes both the speaker of parliament and his substitute are now being chose by parliament itself," Senator Attacho said. □

withdrawal.

"We expect that 30 law proposals still are important to be dealt with in this parliamentary year," Atacho said. He pointed out that this was a significant move from past years, when hundreds of laws, some dating from the 1950s and 1960s, had been backlogged.

## SSS islands

The attendance report cards for St. Maarten, Saba and St. Eustatius parliamentarians for the past year were also released by Atacho.

Former St. Maarten parliamentarian, now Commissioner William Marlin (NA) clocked in 44 per cent attendance for public meetings and 32 per cent for Central Committee meetings. Former parliamentarian, now Commissioner Frans Richardson (NA) had 50 per cent attendance for public meetings and 44 per cent for Central Committee meetings. For Erno Labega the list showed 83 per cent attendance at public meetings and 51 per cent at Central Committee meetings.

Marlin and Richardson were replaced in parliament by Rodolphe Samuel and George Pantophlet after the former two took up their posts as commissioners on June 8. Samuel scored 33 per cent attendance for public meetings and 12 per cent for Central Committee meetings. Pantophlet had 33 per cent for public meetings and eight per cent for Central Committee meetings.

Parliamentarian Ray Hassell of Saba had 83 per cent attendance for public meetings and 50 per cent for Central Committee meetings.

Parliamentarian Reginald Zaandam of St. Eustatius tallied 66 per cent attendance for public meetings and 44 per cent for Central Committee meetings.

Atacho had perfect attendance for public meetings and 93 per cent for Central Committee meetings.

Atacho cautioned that

oftentimes parliamentarians who were Island Council members would choose to attend Island Council meetings instead of Parliament, because they tended to give more priority to those meetings. He said this fact must be considered when the attendance records were viewed.

## Accomplishments

Atacho said a major accomplishment of the part year had been the dissemination of regular information to the public about the activities of Parliament via press conferences every two weeks.

"Another accomplishment is that Parliament completely reviewed its regulation of order, dated 1987, so that its committee meetings and Central Committee meetings are regulated properly," he stated.

Parliament compiled and distributed information packages to all high school students of the Antilles in the three official languages, to better teach them about the parliamentary democracy of the Antilles.

A member of parliament was appointed to the board of the Parliament of Latin America Parlatino.

## Disappointment

The past year also had its disappointments. Chief among these was the end of the Parliamentary Contact Plan Meetings of the Kingdom Parliament.

It is now up to the Kingdom partners and the new parliaments of countries St. Maarten and Curaçao, when these are established, to decide how to move forward with this type of parliamentary sessions, Atacho stated. □



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# Valero Cuts Use of Maya Oil, Shifts to Lighter Grades

By Barbara Powell and Aaron Clark

Valero Energy Corp., the largest U.S. refiner, is shutting coking units and processing lighter oil to increase refining margins, Chief Executive Officer Bill Klesse said today in a presentation to investors. Klesse said that Valero is cutting its use of Mexican Maya crude by 60 percent, along with shutting cokers and fluid catalytic crackers. He said that he expected consolidation and rationalization of assets throughout the industry.

"Because the light-to-heavy crude oil differential narrowed considerably, other refiners may be considering taking similar steps," said Andy Lipow, president of Lipow Oil Associates LLC in Houston. Heavy, sour Maya crude from Mexico was worth \$6.20 a barrel less than light, sweet West Texas Intermediate oil at 10:20 a.m. today, according to data compiled by Bloomberg, compared with an \$11.04 discount a year ago. The profit margin for a refinery running Maya crude was \$2.67 a barrel yesterday, from \$18.67 last year, according to an Ensys Energy refining model.

"We're moving lighter feedstock through our refineries, and we continue to reduce operations at many of our existing cokers," Klesse said. Valero's use of the heavy, sour oil from Mexico is falling from around 500,000 to 200,000 barrels a day, he said.

## Heavy Crude

Seven of Valero's 16 North American refineries mainly run heavy, or more dense, grades of crude oil that require further processing to yield higher-margin products such as gasoline and diesel. Only one of the seven, in Wilmington, California, has a coker that is running at planned rates.

A refinery running heavy

crude produces a large amount of fuel oil, which is processed in a coker into distillate and gasoline. Valero has shut three cokers and cut the rates in half at three other refineries. Klesse said Valero is continuing to reduce coker rates as demand from refineries in India has reduced the discounts for heavy crude.

"What has happened to Valero though has really been an issue with the heavy-sour discount," Klesse said.

"One of the key drivers has been the falling of world oil production."

A refinery processing lighter crude would produce more high-value products such as gasoline and diesel. Refiners running heavy, sour crude profit when those crude grades sell at a wide discount to light, sweet crude.

## Output Cuts

Valero and other refiners built upgrading units such as cokers to take advantage of discounts for heavy crude. Output cuts from the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries have come primarily from the lower-cost heavy grades, tightening supply and narrowing the discounts.

"I don't anticipate major impact on product supply unless they're cutting runs overall because they'll probably substitute something that gets a better light-product yield than" the Maya crude, said Tom Knight, vice president of trading and supply at Truman Arnold Cos. in Texarkana, Texas.

Global refinery operating rates are in the low-80 percent range now, according to slides accompanying Klesse's presentation, and could fall into the mid-70 percent range. The company yesterday dropped its estimated third-quarter crude-oil throughput for refineries in the Northeastern U.S. by 20,000

barrels, and now expects throughput from 480,000 to 490,000 barrels a day.

## Lower Rates

Valero has also cut processing rates on the coker at its Paulsboro, New Jersey, refinery, one of four refineries that can run medium grades of crude oil. Four other refineries primarily run light, sweet crude.

"We're definitely using lighter and sweeter crude throughout the system," Bill Day, a Valero spokesman, said in an interview.

Valero, based in San Antonio, owns 16 refineries from Quebec to Aruba. Valero on July 16 shut its Aruba refinery, the third-largest in the Caribbean, after operating it



at a loss in the second quarter. The plant produced distillates, intermediate feedstocks and blending components for the U.S., South American and European markets.

Valero has about 15 percent of the 2.5 million-barrel-a-day coking capacity in North

America, according to Sander Cohan, an analyst with Energy Security Analysis Inc. in Wakefield, Massachusetts.

Valero fell 34 cents, or 1.8 percent, to \$18.41 in New York Stock Exchange composite trading. The stock has dropped 15 percent this year. □

# Industrials, financials pull stock market higher

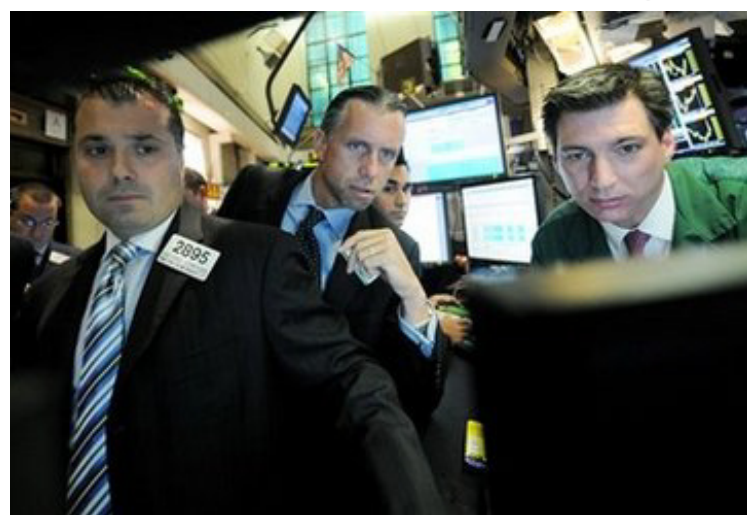
By TIM PARADIS,  
AP Business Writer

NEW YORK — The stock market extended its gains to a fourth day as the Federal Reserve said the economy was stabilizing.

The Standard & Poor's 500 index, which is the basis for many mutual funds, reached an 11-month high as industrial stocks rallied. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 50 points to its second-highest close of the year.

The market stumbled briefly following the release of the Fed's report on regional economies, which also found that consumer spending would rise but only because of car purchases linked to the government's brief Cash for Clunkers program. The report also said the job market remains weak.

The prolonged slump in consumer spending has been one of the most serious points of worry for economists, and the Fed's warning about it deflated some of the market's optimism. About 70 percent of the U.S. economy depends



**FILE -** This Sept. 8, 2008 file photo shows Anthony Campagna, left, Donald Himpele Jr., and Chris Enright, right, all of Spear, Leeds, & Kellogg Specialists, gathering around the post where their firm trades Fannie Mae prior to the opening bell at the New York Stock Exchange in New York. A year after edging dangerously close to free fall, there are signs the economy is regaining a foothold. But Americans' sense of financial security is badly shaken and the nation confronts questions that defy quick or comfortable answers.

(AP Photo/Henny Ray Abrams, File)

on spending by consumers. Matt Lloyd, chief investment strategist at Advisors Asset Management, said investors were jittery following the Fed's report because many traders are fearful of a correction following a 50 percent surge in stocks over the past six months.

"To me there is no conviction" behind the market's recent gains, Lloyd said.

The Dow rose 49.88, or 0.5 percent, to 9,547.22. The index has added 267 points, or 2.9 percent, in four days. It was the Dow's second-highest close of the year, just below its Aug. 27 close. □





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<b>Caribbean Speed Printing N.V.</b> Westraat # 22 Oranjestad, Aruba Tel: (297) 582-7800 Fax: (297) 582-7044	<b>Sales Team</b> Elly Erasmus Mareijke Croes Wendy Kelkboom
<b>www.arubatoday.com</b> <b>E-mail news@arubatoday.com</b>	<b>Page Designer</b> Dina Maria
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## Obama Goes Before Congress to "Dispel Myths, Silliness"

John Nichols

The Nation -- When a president schedules an address to a joint session of the Congress, he essentially says: "OK, folks, this time it's for real."

The speech to the assembled members of the House and Senate, with all its pomp and circumstance, is a much bigger deal than a televised press conference or even one of those, seated-behind-the-desk, eyes-on-the-camera statements that presidents usually deliver after having ordered bombs dropped on some distant land or when they must apologize for an impeachable offense that might yet be talked around.

So Barack Obama has set himself a tall task this Wednesday night.

He must grab hold of a drifting debate about healthcare reform and impose not just clarity but a sense of purpose and direction.

Prior to the speech, the president more or less acknowledged that he had blown the roll-out of the reform initiative.

Appearing on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America," the president admitted that he "probably left too much ambiguity out there, which allowed, then, opponents of reform to come in and to fill up the air waves with a lot of nonsense -- everything from this ridiculous idea that we were setting up death panels to false notions that this was designed to provide health insurance to illegal immigrants."

Aside from the word "probably," that's an accurate assessment of the fiasco.

Obama also seems to recognize that his first task is to explain to angry Americans and a confused Congress what it is that he wants.

"I think what the country is going to know is exactly what I think will solve our healthcare crisis, they will have a lot of clarity about what I think is the best to move forward," Obama said Wednesday morning. "So the intent of the speech is to A, make sure that the American people know exactly what it is we are proposing, B, to make sure that Democrats and Republicans understand that I am open to new ideas, that not being rigid and ideological, but we do intend to get something done this year." The fact that "B" sort of contradicts, or at least undermines, "A" is not a hopeful sign.

Of course Obama must address the "death panel" extremes to which opponents of reform have pushed the debate.

As the president says, he has a responsibility to "dispel some of the myths and frankly silliness [...] out there."

But if the president is serious about "get[ting] something done this year," his task involves a lot more than dispelling myths□

# \*\*\* Human Hints Daily \*\*\*

## Unify Your Purpose

The foundation to creating your reality is knowing clearly what we want. Without a clear direction, we cannot define our actions toward a goal. We end up squandering our energy and wasting our time in action without purpose. If you are not perfectly clear on what you want out of life, become so. Otherwise, you will allow life to toss you around like a rag doll in a hurricane.

You must create a beacon that will keep you on course in the pursuit of your dreams.

We all have a physical self, mental self, emotional self, spiritual self, ego self and many others. Once you have clear goals and desires, you can align the different aspects of yourself toward reaching the common goal.

This sets up a powerful resonance, where the various aspects of yourself are in harmony, empowering each other to bring you closer to your goals. When your different aspects resonate with each other, you become far stronger than just the sum of your parts.

Start by feeling the emotions of having achieved your goal.

Imagine yourself in your new life, and focus on the emotions you embrace after success. Feeling the emotion of success will release success hormones into your physical body. The hormones will flood your cells and reprogram your DNA for success. When you imagine this process occurring, you will be consciously directing your body to reprogram itself for success.

Once you embrace the emotional sensation of having achieved your goal, concentrate on aligning your logical self with your goal.

How does your successful future self occupy your mind? What do you think about each day in your successful life? What are the problems that you must work out on a daily basis? Do you worry about how to get 50 friends and family to Paris for the weekend, when you only have two private jets? What charities and causes will you donate millions of dollars to? What tropical island will you buy a house on?

Now that your emotions and logic are aligned toward your desires, picture yourself physically in your successful life.

Put yourself into action in your fantasy life. How do you spend your time? What do you do each day? The next time you're in your car, imagine that you're driving your BMW convertible along the coast, on your way from choosing furniture for your new beach bungalow. Taking physical action within your fantasies will help solidify them into three dimensions.

Now that a few different aspects of your self are aligned toward your future fantasy life, think of the new desires your successful self will strive for. When you become abundant, will you want to start a charitable foundation? Will you want to travel the world? Your desires will change, but you must always have desires. We should never stop pursuing goals, although they will change as we grow. When we stop striving for things, we stop growing and stagnate in boredom.

Define what you want and imagine yourself in your fantasy life, in as many ways as possible. This will align your bodies toward a common goal, which solves half the problem. The remaining necessity action. You must take physical action that brings you closer to your goal. As moments pass with everything you do, ask yourself if your time and action in that moment are bringing you closer to your goal. If not, what must you change in order to be able to work toward your goal?

Even if you must work all day every day and you hate it, you are earning money, which will help you achieve your goals. If you are spending time with family, you are abundant in that aspect of your life and being surrounded by abundance will draw more abundance to other aspects of your life.

Tomorrow we will look at the road blocks and resistance we create in order to sabotage our own efforts, to unconsciously insure that we don't reach our goals.

Until Tomorrow...

Go to [www.HumanHints.com](http://www.HumanHints.com) to sign up to receive this column in your email each day.

~Quentin Danziger

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has also studied many avenues of alternative thought.

HumanHints is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

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# Source: Chris Brown won't perform Jackson tribute

By ANTHONY McCARTNEY,  
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES — Chris Brown won't perform at a Michael Jackson tribute concert in Austria, contrary to statements by promoters, a person close to the situation said Wednesday. A publicist for Mary J. Blige, also touted for the show, said she won't be there either.

Brown never committed to perform at the concert in Vienna, said the person, who was not authorized to speak publicly and requested anonymity.

Karynne Tencer, a publicist for Blige, said Wednesday that she wanted to attend the Sept. 26 concert, but had another commitment.

Organizers at a press conference in Vienna on Tuesday told reporters that Brown, Blige, Natalie Cole and Akon were among the confirmed artists.

Cole spokeswoman Maureen O'Connor

said the singer had discussed it with organizers, but she may have a conflict and is not 100 percent confirmed. A representatives for Akon did not immediately return messages left Wednesday.

A concert spokesman did not immediately return an e-mail message.

Jackson's brother Jermaine, who first announced the concert last month on "Larry King Live," said in London on Wednesday that he was confident Brown would appear. And concert promoter Georg Kindel said that a Los Angeles judge was scheduled to rule Wednesday on whether Brown, 20, could travel to the show.

No motion has been filed with the judge handling Brown's criminal case, court spokeswoman Vania Stuelp said, and the person with knowledge of the singer's situation said none would be filed. Brown,

who is serving five years of probation for beating his former girlfriend, Rihanna, would need the judge's permission for any international travel, Stuelp said.

"Chris Brown is working out some situations but he definitely expressed to us that he wants to be here and it's just up to what he's going through with his court case right now but he's definitely going to work that out and be here," Jermaine Jackson said Wednesday at the London press conference. He said "people make mistakes" and Brown deserved forgiveness.

The concert is being billed as the main global tribute for the King of Pop, who died June 25 in Los Angeles.

Jermaine Jackson also said he hoped Stevie Wonder would take part in the show, to be staged in front of a 17th-century palace in the Austrian capital. □



FILE - In this Tuesday, Aug. 25, 2009 picture, Chris Brown stands before the judge during his sentencing for assaulting his girlfriend Rihanna, at Los Angeles County Superior Court in Los Angeles.

(AP Photo/Rick Loomis, Pool)

## CBS' 'Big Brother' gaining in viewers



In this image released by CBS, the cast of the CBS summer show 'Big Brother 11' is shown.

(AP Photo/CBS, Sonja Flemming)

By DAVID BAUDER,  
AP Television Writer

NEW YORK — CBS is nearing summer's end as the only major broadcaster with more viewers than last summer, helped in part by a revived "Big Brother" franchise.

Three separate prime-time "Big Brother" episodes were among Nielsen Media Research's 25 most-watched programs last week. The series that throws a group of strangers together in a house and films their every move is in its 11th edition, and viewership is up 7 percent from last year.

That defies traditional TV gravity; it's rare that a long-running program would show growth. The series mined the latest reality TV star known more for bad behavior than anything else: Chima Simone was kicked off for disobeying producers' orders to put on a

microphone, then throwing the microphone in a spa. She also apologized for calling a cast member of Lebanese descent a terrorist.

CBS viewership is up 5 percent over last summer, Nielsen said. No wonder that, with a week to go for this season's "Big Brother," CBS on Wednesday announced that a 12th edition of the series will be broadcast in summer 2010.

NBC's "America's Got Talent" topped the ratings last week, for both its Tuesday and Wednesday editions. ABC, which has generally had a wipeout of a summer, had a stronger week than usual with a country music special and Saturday night college football game.

For the week, CBS averaged 5.9 million viewers (3.9 rating, 7 share), NBC had 5.7 million (3.7, 77), ABC had 4.7 million (2.9, 5), Fox had 3.8 million

(2.4, 4), My Network TV had 1.4 million (0.9, 2), the CW had 990,000 (0.7, 1) and ION Television had 620,000 (0.4, 1).

Among the Spanish-language networks, Univision led with a 3.2 million average (1.7 rating, 3 share), TeleFutura had 1.1 million and Telemundo had 1 million (both 0.5, 1) and Azteca had 160,000 (0.1, 0).

NBC's "Nightly News" topped the evening newscasts with an average of 7.6 million viewers (5.1, 11). ABC's "World News," on the week anchor Charles Gibson announced his retirement, was second with 7.2 million (4.8, 10) and the "CBS Evening News" had 5.4 million viewers (3.7, 8).

A ratings point represents 1,149,000 households, or 1 percent of the nation's estimated 114.9 million TV homes. The share is the percentage of in-use televisions tuned to a given show.

For the week of Aug. 31-Sept. 6, the top 10 shows, their networks and viewerships: "America's Got Talent" (Tuesday), NBC, 12.81 million; "America's Got Talent" (Wednesday), NBC, 12.39 million; "NCIS," CBS, 10.1 million; "Two and a Half Men," CBS, 8.46 million; "The Big Bang Theory," CBS, 8.34 million; "CSI: Miami," CBS, 7.89 million; "Big Brother 11" (Tuesday), CBS, 7.79 million; "The Mentalist," CBS, 7.73 million; "Hell's Kitchen," Fox, 7.63 million; "Wipeout," ABC, 7.62 million. □

## Disney Expo seeks to monetize Mouse-mania

By MICHELLE RINDELS,  
Associated Press Writer

LOS ANGELES — Taking a page from the wildly popular Comic-Con, Disney is wishing upon a four-day expo this weekend to draw more enthusiasm from its loyal and well-wired fan base.

Clubs and fan fests have long worked to rally "Star Trek," Barbie and comic book collectors, but the D23 Expo, which begins Thursday in Anaheim, and an online fan club of the same name launched earlier this year are Disney's first attempts to organize and romance its far-flung followers.

Over the long run, strengthening the relationship between the company and its fans online can create self-perpetuating marketing, where eager fans can promote Disney products online without the company incurring further costs.

By copying Comic-Con — which attracted about 126,000 comic book lovers to this year's July event in San Diego — Disney can tantalize devotees with behind-the-scenes access to the franchise's celebrities and upcoming movies.

"When you talk about Disney fans, they want to consume every iota, every scrap of minutiae they can get their hands on," said Steven Clark, head of D23. "All this is unprecedented — we've never granted this kind of access to our fans."

Disney is corralling all the divisions and businesses under its umbrella — about 30 brands, including Pixar, ABC-TV and the theme parks — for the event at the Anaheim Convention Center. For \$37 a day, attendees get advance movie screenings, peeks into the Disney archive collections and updates on the company's theme park expansions.

While it's open to the public, the expo is the capstone event for the D23 club, which was named to signify creator Walt Disney's 1923 move to Hollywood. The company started selling \$75 annual memberships in March but won't say how many have been sold. Members-only perks include a subscription to a collectors' magazine and access to exclusive events.

Stagnant DVD sales, less spending at theme parks and lower ad revenue at the company's TV networks have dampened Disney profits the past three quarters compared to last year.

The expo itself is less a reaction to a few bad earnings reports and more of an investment in brand loyalty, said New York-based financial analyst David Bank of RBC Capital Markets. □



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### Catch your own dinner

12 noon and from 1pm to 5pm. A charter includes: captain, mate, all fishing equipment, bait, sodas and bottled water. On a full day charter sandwiches and snacks are also included. You can call Herby directly at (297) 592 4040 or go to [www.driftwoodaruba.com](http://www.driftwoodaruba.com).

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The Bistro's menu offers everyone's favorites, but with a culinary Belgian twist. This might be an unusual

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President Barack Obama addresses a joint session of Congress on healthcare at the U.S. Capitol in Washington, on Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009.

Associated Press

## Obama to Congress: 'Time for bickering is over'

KEN GUGGENHEIM

Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Barack Obama urged Congress to enact sweeping health care legislation Wednesday night, declaring the “time for bickering is over” and the moment has arrived to help millions who have insurance and many more without it.

His nationally televised speech to a joint session of Congress comes as Obama’s popularity is falling, opposition Republicans are on the attack and his fellow Democrats are divided about what kind of plan to pursue.

“I am not the first president to take up this cause, but I am determined to be the last,” Obama said.

Health care has become the definitive issue for Obama, just nine months after he took office amid enormous expectations at home and abroad. His success or failure may determine whether he has the political clout to press ahead on issues like climate change, arms control and the Afghanistan war.

It is also likely to shape next year’s congressional elections.

Obama said there is widespread agreement on about 80 percent of what must be included in legislation. And yet, criticizing opposition Republicans without saying so, he added: “Instead of honest debate, we have seen scare tactics” and ideological warfare that offers no hope for compromise.

He blasted Republicans for spreading the “cynical and irresponsible” charge that his

legislation would include “death panels” with the power to hasten the death of senior citizens.

“Well, the time for bickering is over,” Obama said. “The time for games has passed. Now is the season for action.”

The venue of Wednesday’s speech underscored the importance of the issue. Besides the annual State of the Union address, presidents seldom speak to a joint session of Congress, consisting of lawmakers from both chambers.

But the speech was aimed as much at the millions of Americans watching from home, many of whom have become disillusioned with Obama’s handling of health care. An Associated Press-GfK poll released hours before the address showed that disapproval of Obama’s handling of health care has jumped to 52 percent, from 43 percent in July.

Obama’s overall approval rating has also suffered a blow. The survey showed that 49 percent now disapprove of how he is handling his job as president, up from 42 percent who disapproved in July.

Obama appealed for a health care overhaul that provides new and crucial protections for people who already have insurance, affordable access to coverage to those without, and reduced spending for families, businesses and government.

Obama spoke in favor of an option for the U.S. government to sell insurance in competition with private industry.

Continued on Next Page

## Vegas weddings abound as numbers align on 9-9-09



A limousine passes the Little White Chapel, Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009 in Las Vegas. The date 9/9/09 is proving popular at Las Vegas wedding chapels. Employees normally off on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the marriage services division of the Clark County clerk’s office were called in to help quickly distribute licenses, Marriage Services Supervisor Cheryl Vernon said.

Associated Press

OSKAR GARCIA

Associated Press Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Two years after Las Vegas chapels hit the wedding date jackpot with lucky sevens, it’s all eyes on the nines for 9-9-09.

Continued on Page B3



In this July 16, 2007 photo, Stephen Farrell, a reporter for The New York Times, is shown in Iraq. British commandos freed the New York Times reporter Wednesday Sept. 9, 2009, after he was kidnapped by militants in northern Afghanistan last week, the paper said. Farrell was taken hostage Saturday along with his translator in the northern province of Kunduz when they went to cover a German-ordered airstrike of two hijacked fuel tankers.

Associated Press

## NY Times: Reporter freed as situation worsened

DEEPTI HAJELA

Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A New York Times reporter taken hostage in Afghanistan and rescued by British commandos Wednesday told his editors that the situation in the Taliban hide-out where he was held had been growing more ominous.

Continued on Page B6





Senate Finance Committee Chairman Sen. Max Baucus, D-Mont., left, talks with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada, center, and Senate Majority Whip Richard Durbin of Illinois on Capitol Hill in Washington, Wednesday, Sept. 9, 2009, prior to President Obama's speech on healthcare to a joint session of Congress.

# OBAMA

*Continued from Page B1*

But he said he was open to alternatives that create choices for consumers — a declaration sure to displease its liberal supporters.

Some Americans who have suffered from high costs and insurance practices sat with

*Associated Press*  
first lady Michelle Obama during the speech, and Obama mentioned them in his remarks. Vicki Kennedy, the widow of Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, was there. The Democratic senator, who died last month, had made health care a career-long cause.

Obama drew a standing ovation when he recounted stories of Americans whose coverage was denied or delayed by their insurers with catastrophic results.

“That is heartbreaking, it is wrong, and no one should be treated that way in the United States of America.”

Obama made health care reform a priority when he ran for president last year. The United States is the only developed country without a universal program of health care. As many as 50 million Americans lack health insurance.

Despite Obama's enormous popularity on taking office, he has struggled to win support through a difficult summer. Opponents have packed lawmakers' town hall meetings, denouncing Obama's plans. Some opposition was driven by Web-fueled falsehoods, such as claims that “death panels” would determine the fate of elderly patients. But

there were more legitimate concerns about how an overhaul would affect the quality of health care and whether it would further swell the government's huge deficit. Responding to the president's speech on behalf of Republicans, Rep. Charles Boustany of Louisiana said the country wants Obama to instruct Democratic congressional leaders that “it's time to start over on a common-sense, bipartisan plan focused on lowering the cost of health care while improving quality.”

“Replacing your family's current health care with government-run health care is not the answer,” said Boustany, a former cardiac surgeon. Obama said the changes he has in mind would cost about \$900 billion over decade, “less than we have spent on the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, and less than the tax cuts for the wealthiest few Americans” passed during the Bush

administration.

Several congressional panels have been working on health care bills, but only one — the Senate Finance Committee — offered a reasonable prospect for a bipartisan compromise. But the panel's Democratic chairman, Max Baucus, said earlier Wednesday that a deal was unlikely and that he would introduce his own proposal next week.

Liberals have been urging Obama to use his large Democratic majorities in both chambers of Congress to disregard Republican objections and push through a plan with a public option. Some have threatened to vote against any bill that doesn't have one.

But it is not clear that Obama can win approval for a government plan, especially since some conservative Democrats are also wary of it. Obama intends to follow up his speech with an appearance Saturday in Minneapolis, the White House announced. □



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9-9-09

**Continued from Page B1**

Wedding officials in Sin City and elsewhere staged a marathon set of nuptials and vow renewals on Wednesday during what was anticipated to be of the busiest days of the year — the quirky date of Sept. 9, 2009, or 9-9-09.

The New York City Clerk's office said 200 couples had wed by midday at its refurbished marriage bureau — about four times the Wednesday average. Nine couples in Hollywood spent 99 cents each to get married at a 99 Cents Only store on Sunset Boulevard.

Jessica Skrutvold of Las Vegas said she and her husband-to-be Chad Lyons were expecting nine guests for their 9 p.m. wedding, which coincidentally celebrates her favorite number.

"The easiest day for my poor memory to remember was 9-9-09, and we've been doing everything last-minute ever since," said the 31-year-old who works for a local insurance agency. "It was easy, and both of us can remember it and never forget."

Skrutvold called to book a chapel in March and found the only open slots were for 8:30 or 9 that night.

"We took the most obvious choice," she said.

Gambling on nines wasn't limited to casino baccarat

tables in Las Vegas, where players try to beat the house by getting as close as possible to a sum of nine using cards.

The Virginia Lottery reported that the combinations 9-9-9, 9-9-9-9 and 9-9-0-9 all sold out for the midday Pick 3 and Pick 4 drawings. Pick 3 combinations are capped at 8 million, Pick 4 at 6 million. The lottery would have lost money on those games had those numbers been drawn, but they weren't. Pick 3 was closest at 9-0-0; Pick 4 contained no nines.

The consecutive nines turned out to be really lucky for Corey Aldridge and Gwendolyn Whitmore, one of the couples who won a 99 Cents Only Stores contest for their five-minute ceremony.

The couple, who originally wanted to wed last Valentine's Day, were returning from a trip to Texas last year when their car collided with an 18-wheel tractor-trailer rig.

"We just got done with our medical issues and our insurance hasn't picked up because I was self-employed, so our finances have been dwindling," Aldridge said as he waited for Whitmore above the store's loading dock.

There, behind a partition, his future wife and eight other brides ranging in age from their 20s to their 60s were putting finishing touches on

their hair and makeup.

On the Las Vegas Strip, Tony Thompson and his new wife Lisa of New York exchanged vows before life-sized figurines of Justin Timberlake and Jennifer Lopez during a short ceremony at 9:09 a.m. at the Madame Tussauds wax museum on the Las Vegas Strip. They were joined near a small stage by four couples renewing vows and an officiant — nine people total.

"It seems like the whole town is celebrating, like we walked into this big celebration," Tony Thompson, 53, said. "It's like totally out of the ordinary, everybody's getting married." Chapels were steadily booked throughout the day from the Strip to downtown. Las Vegas Mayor Oscar Goodman planned to renew vows with his wife Carolyn in an evening ceremony conducted by an Elvis Presley impersonator at the Fremont Street Experience.

"I'm hoping that my wife will show up," said Goodman, who married his wife on June 6, 1962 — 6-6-62.

"9-9-09 is so easy that even the biggest of dummies will be able to remember it," he said. "This is Las Vegas' way of saying that we are the wedding capital of the world."

Another 99 couples were waiting until 9:09 p.m. for a shared ceremony in the



**A replica of Henry Hudson's ship Half Moon makes its way up the Hudson River during a ceremony on Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2009 in New York in which Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg welcomed Dutch royals Willem-Alexander, Crown Prince of Orange, and his wife, Princess Maxima to New York for the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's voyage up the river that now bears his name.**

*Associated Press*

observation deck at the Stratosphere Tower. Each paid \$99 for their wedding package.

Spokeswoman Whitney Lloyd said Chapel of the Flowers booked 70 ceremonies for Wednesday, compared with 12 on Sept. 9 last year. She said three 9 a.m. slots were booked at least a year ago — an eternity by Las Vegas standards.

"Grooms love it, because they'll definitely remember their wedding day," Lloyd said. Employees normally off on Tuesdays and Wednesdays in the marriage services division of the Clark County clerk's

office were called in to help quickly distribute licenses.

Marriage Services Supervisor Mariah Consiglieri said 637 licenses were issued on Tuesday, a boost from the average of 262 per day but far from the 1,623 issued on Aug. 6, 2007, in anticipation of 7-7-07. Another 975 licenses were issued on Aug. 7 that year — a Saturday.

Weddings have declined steadily in Las Vegas since 2004, when roughly 128,000 couples were married. About 96,000 couples were married in Las Vegas last year, and officials expect fewer than that for 2009. □

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# Senate passes new international visitor fee



**FILE** - In this Nov. 26, 2008 file photo, passengers arrive for flights out of Cleveland Hopkins Airport in Cleveland, Ohio. The fall is typically the weakest season of the year for air travel, and airlines are worried. After launching handfuls of fare sales this summer, 2009, major carriers are trying to get ahead of the curve - launching sales earlier and stretching them out longer.

**KEVIN FREKING**  
Associated Press Writer  
WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators voted Wednesday to charge international travelers a \$10 fee to help pay for a new nonprofit corporation to promote tourism in the United States.

The legislation, which passed 79-19, was backed by the travel industry. Lawmakers said many international governments aggressively help tourism in their countries by subsidizing promotional programs, but the United States leaves that work to

*Associated Press*  
the private sector and to state and local governments. Much of the money for the promotional efforts will come from fees paid by the travel industry. The rest would come from the \$10 fee on international visitors. The United States began

requiring people who do not need visas to enter the country to register online at least 72 hours before travel and renew their registration every two years. If the new proposal should become law, it would require people to pay the \$10 fee when they register.

The European Union has said that some U.S. travelers to Europe could face retaliatory fees if the bill should pass. A similar bill has been proposed in the House of Representatives but has not been voted on. It would have to be passed and the two bills joined into a single piece of legislation to be signed into law.

Senators from states dependent on tourism, such as Florida and Nevada, led the effort to pass the bill, along with Democratic Sen. Byron Dorgan, from the agricultural state of North Dakota, the bill's chief sponsor.

"We desperately need jobs.

We're very dependent on tourism. This bill will help create tourism-type jobs, but it won't just do it for Nevada," said that state's junior senator, Republican John Ensign. "When people come to our country to visit, they may come to one state primarily, but they usually stop in several other states along the way."

Senators, citing data from industry sources, said ramped-up marketing efforts would lead to an additional 1.6 million international travelers coming to the United States annually, and they said those travelers spend about \$4,500 per visit.

About 58 million international travelers visited the United States last year. Industry officials say many potential visitors are looking elsewhere because of enhanced border security since the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks and because of negative coverage from foreign media outlets.

In backing the legislation, Democrats also were looking to give Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid a boost as he seeks a fifth term representing Nevada in the Senate. In June, supporters could not generate the 60 votes needed to have an up-and-down vote on the legislation.

"He found a way to rescue this bill, bring it back to life," said Democratic Sen. Richard Durbin, the Democrats' second-ranking senator. □

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This Saturday, Sept. 5, 2009 photo shows Afghan police officers try to pull a vehicle, which was used by a New York Times reporter in Kunduz, north of Kabul, Afghanistan. British commandos freed the New York Times reporter early Wednesday from Taliban captives who kidnapped him over the weekend in northern Afghanistan, but one of the commandos and a Times translator were killed in the rescue, officials said.

**REPORTER FREED**  
*Continued from Page B1*

Stephen Farrell and his translator were taken hostage Saturday in the northern province of Kunduz when they went to cover a German-ordered airstrike of two hijacked fuel tankers. The bombing, carried out by U.S. jets,

*Associated Press*  
caused a number of civilian casualties. British commandos carried out a raid to free him early Wednesday; the translator and a British commando were killed. Times Executive Editor Bill Keller said he had understood from the military that they did not intend to

conduct a raid unless the situation turned “particularly menacing, and they had actionable intelligence and a high probability of success.” Keller said he doesn’t know what triggered the decision to carry out the raid, but that Farrell told him the situation had been growing worse. “It’s entirely possible that the Allied forces picked up on a plan either to move the hostages or to do something with them,” Keller said Wednesday. The translator, Sultan Munadi was killed in the firefight, said a spokesman for the Kunduz governor. A British defense official said he couldn’t rule out the possibility Munadi, 34, was killed by British gunfire. Keller said the Times was grateful Farrell was alive, but saddened by the deaths of Munadi and the commando. He said he would not second-guess the military’s decision to take action. “I don’t know enough about what intelligence they had,” he said. Another Times reporter and an Afghan colleague were kidnapped in November near Kabul and later taken to Pakistan. The men, David Rohde and Tahir Ludin, escaped seven months later. Keller said the Times had done a

review of security protocols after the Rohde kidnapping, but that another review would be undertaken. Covering Afghanistan carries risks for journalists, but it’s a story that needs to be told, said Joel Simon, executive director of the Committee to Protect Journalists. “This is huge story of tremendous international significance and the media has an obligation to the best of its ability to cover it,” he said. “The question becomes, how do you do that safely?” He said many of the reporters working in the area are experienced, having spent time in Iraq. He said they are constantly assessing the risks and weighing what kind of acceptable chances they can take in their efforts to cover stories. “The reporters on the ground are in the best position in most circumstances to make those judgments,” he said. Keller said Times reporters are allowed a great deal of leeway because they are the best ones to judge the level of risk. He said the Times talks to its reporters regularly about the ground rules and about which areas of the country may be particularly dangerous. □



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PG-13	TYLER PERRY'S I CAN DO BAD ALL BY MYSELF			
	daily:	4:00	6:30	9:00
	matinee:	1:00	late show:	11:30
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4			
	daily:	4:00	6:00	8:00
	matinee:	12:00	2:00	late show: 10:00
PG	ALIENS IN THE ATTIC			
	daily:	4:45		
	matinee:	12:15	2:30	late show:
R	INGLORIOUS BASTERDS			
	daily:	4:30	7:45	
	matinee:	1:15	late show:	11:00
R	THE ORPHAN			
	daily:	6:15	8:45	
	matinee:	12:30	3:30	late show: 11:30
PG	SHORTS			
	daily:	5:30	7:30	9:45
	matinee:	1:30	3:30	late show: 11:45
PG-13	THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE			
	daily:		7:00	9:15
	matinee:		late show:	12:00

AT PASEO HERENCIA				
PG-13	TYLER PERRY'S I CAN DO BAD ALL BY MYSELF			
	daily:	6:00	8:30	
	matinee:	12:45	3:15	late show: 11:15
R	INGLORIOUS BASTERDS			
	daily:	4:30	7:45	
	matinee:	1:15	late show:	11:00
PG-13	THE TIME TRAVELER'S WIFE			
	daily:	4:00	6:30	9:00
	matinee:	1:45	late show:	11:30
PG-13	G:I: JOE: THE RISE OF THE COBRA			
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	matinee:	1:00	3:30	late show: 11:15
R	FINAL DESTINATION 4			
	daily:	5:30	7:30	9:30
	matinee:	1:30	3:30	late show: 11:45
PG-13	DISTRICT 9			
	daily:	5:15	7:45	10:00
	matinee:	12:30	3:00	late show: 12:15





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# Police raid ends hijacking in Mexico; 1 arrested

MARK STEVENSON

Associated Press Writer

MEXICO CITY (AP) — A Bolivian religious fanatic briefly hijacked a jetliner from the beach resort of Cancun as it landed in Mexico City on Wednesday, police said. All passengers and the crew were released unharmed.

The Bible-carrying hijacker used a juice can he said was a bomb to hold the 103 passengers and crew on the tarmac for more than an hour. Masked police stormed the aircraft with their guns drawn and escorted several handcuffed men away without firing a shot. Police later said there was only one hijacker.

Jose Flores, 44, told investigators he hijacked Aeromexico Flight 576 after a divine revelation, according to Public Safety Secretary Genaro Garcia Luna. Flores said Wednesday's date — 9-9-09 — is the satanic number 666 turned upside down. Flores, speaking to reporters after he was detained, said he took control of the aircraft with "a juice can with some little lights I attached." "Christ is coming soon," he added, smiling.

As the plane was landing, Flores stood up and showed his contraption to a flight attendant, saying he and three others were hijacking the plane, Garcia Luna said. Flores later told police his three companions were "the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost."

He ordered the pilot to circle over Mexico City seven times and asked to speak with Mexican President Felipe Calderon, saying he wanted to warn him of an impending earthquake, Garcia Luna said. Garcia Luna said Flores is a drug addict who was convicted of armed robbery in Bolivia, and has lived in Mexico for 17 years. Flores described himself as a pastor in southern Oaxaca state who had gone to Cancun to preach.

He is also a Christian music singer who in videos posted on YouTube sings of leaving drugs and finding God.

"I was in jail, I was a despicable drug addict, but Christ freed me a few years ago," Flores sings along with recorded norteno music to a crowded stadium.

In other videos, Flores, who goes by the stage name Josmar, is seen playing with

nunchackus and shooting a coin he tosses in the air.

At the Uncionmusic Web site, a Christian music distributor based in Oakland, California, that sells Flores' music on the Internet, he is described as "an international evangelist with a shocking testimony on how God rescued him after his family sent him from Bolivia to Mexico City on a one-way ticket ... because of his addiction to cocaine and alcohol."

Saul Bueno, of Uncionmusic, said that he doesn't personally know Flores and that his music has sold poorly since they began offering his CDs two years ago.

"As a Christian I think about what was going through his mind, because that's not the way to get attention," Bueno said. The attorney general's office said it was opening an investigation into terrorism and kidnapping.

U.S., French and Mexican citizens were among the passengers, according to a U.S. official in Washington who was briefed on the situation. The official was not authorized to discuss the case and spoke on condition of anonymity.

A U.S. Embassy spokesman



Jose Flores, 44, of Bolivia is shown to the press after his arrest at the police hanger in Mexico City's airport Wednesday Sept. 9, 2009. Flores admitted he briefly hijacked a jetliner from the beach resort of Cancun as it landed in Mexico City. All passengers and the crew were released unharmed.

said at least 14 U.S. citizens were on the plane and they were being interviewed by Mexican authorities at the airport.

Passenger Rocio Garcia told the Televisa network that the pilot made an announcement after landing in Mexico City that the airplane was being hijacked.

"These were scary moments," she said.

Passengers said the hijacker stayed in his seat throughout the incident and the pilot came back from the cockpit to negotiate with him.

Mexican officials negotiated the release of women and

children through the pilot before sending in the police. The plane was isolated at the end of a runway in an area designed for emergencies and the airport remained open.

The most recent hijacking attempt in the Americas occurred April 19, when a man with a handgun tried to commandeer a Canadian jetliner in Jamaica. The standoff ended before takeoff at Montego Bay's airport when military commandos burst onto the plane and disarmed the man, who was described as "mentally challenged." □



# Netanyahu risks U.S. anger by building settlements

**JOSEF FEDERMAN**

**Associated Press Writer**

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has given the green light for hundreds of new homes in a Palestinian-claimed area of Jerusalem, officials confirmed Wednesday, part of a gamble to mollify his restive coalition without sparking a major confrontation with the U.S.

Whether this balancing act can succeed could become clearer this week with the arrival of U.S. Mideast envoy George Mitchell. His response could signal whether the White House is ready to overlook its unhappiness with Israel as it prepares a new push for Mideast peace, perhaps as soon as this month, or whether it's digging in for a showdown over Jewish settlements.

The settlements are a core issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Nearly 500,000 Israelis now live in towns and neighborhoods built in the West Bank and east Jerusalem — lands captured by Israel in the 1967 Mideast war and claimed by the Palestinians. The Palestinians say the ever-growing settler presence will soon make it impossible



In this July 29, 2009 photo, the Jewish neighborhood of Pisgat Zeev in east Jerusalem is seen with the Shuafat refugee camp, background, and Israel's separation barrier running between them. Israel is pushing ahead with a long-delayed plan to build hundreds of apartments in east Jerusalem, staking claims to land the Palestinians want for a future state and complicating already tense relations with the U.S. over its demand for a construction moratorium. The government has chosen developers to build 486 new apartments in the Pisgat Zeev neighborhood after a yearlong delay over pricing disputes, the state-run land agency said Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2009.

for them to establish an independent state in these areas.

In a departure from his predecessor, President Barack Obama has come down hard on Israel's settlement activity, demanding a complete freeze

on all construction, including in east Jerusalem. Israel has rejected the calls, saying some accommodation must be made for "natural growth" in the settler population.

With that in mind, Netanyahu granted approval to build hundreds of new homes in recent days. On Wednesday, officials confirmed the government has chosen developers to build nearly 500 new apartments in Pisgat Zeev, a sprawling neighborhood built for Jews in east Jerusalem. That followed Monday's announcement that 455 new apartments would be built in existing West Bank settlements. Israel also wants to complete work on more than 2,000 other homes currently being built.

Netanyahu has tried to portray the new projects as a prelude to a limited settlement freeze. "We would argue that doing what we're doing now will actually make progress possible tomorrow," said spokesman Mark Regev. Netanyahu aides have tried to play down the significance of the new construction by noting that almost all of the homes are in large settlement blocs that Israel expects to retain under any future peace deal.

They also concede that Netanyahu approved the construction to placate hard-liners in his own coalition government, who are upset about the prospect of a settlement freeze. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were discussing private talks among Netanyahu's inner circle.

For now, the moves are paying off at home. Netanyahu's hard-line coalition partners have largely lined up behind him. But the international community is deeply skeptical.

In the latest public U.S. rebuke, State Department spokesman Ian C. Kelly said Wednesday, "Our position is clear: We believe that Israel has an obligation to cease all settlement activity," whether in east Jerusalem or the West Bank.

Last week, when news of the new settlement construction broke, the U.S. said it "does not accept the legitimacy of continued settlement expansion."

EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner on Wednesday joined the sharp criticism.

"We have to be realistic and see that this settlement issue

is at the moment an issue that blocks the negotiations," Ferrero-Waldner told reporters. The European Union and U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon expressed "concern" over Israel's approval of settlement expansion.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said American credibility in the region was at stake. The Palestinians say they will not restart negotiations, which broke down shortly before Netanyahu took office in March, until Israel halts all settlement construction.

"People are asking the Americans now: If you could not convince the Israelis to stop settlement activity, will anybody in the Arab and Islamic world believe you can make Israel return to the '67 borders or withdraw from settlements?" he said.

The Palestinians claim the West Bank and east Jerusalem, along with the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip, for their hoped-for state. Israel captured all three areas in the 1967 Mideast war, then withdrew from Gaza in 2005. Hamas militants overran that territory two years later.

Behind the rhetoric, however, there are subtle signs of movement, and much will depend on what Mitchell brings with him when he comes this weekend. The Israelis hope he can persuade the Arab world to respond to a settlement freeze with goodwill gestures of their own, such as re-establishing limited trade or diplomatic ties. The Americans are pressing Netanyahu and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to meet for the first time during the U.N. General Assembly later this month. U.S. officials in Washington have hinted that while they're not pleased about the settlement building, they could overlook it if the sides are willing to start talking again.

Palestinian officials say Abbas will probably meet Netanyahu to please the Americans, though it's unclear what would follow. They say he is in touch with Arab leaders in hopes of forming a common position. □

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Photo by Diane Keijzer





# U.S. signing anti-piracy agreement at UN for Somalia

JOHN HEILPRIN

Associated Press Writer

UNITED NATIONS (AP)

— The United States and four other nations signed onto an international plan to fight piracy off the coast of Somalia, committing Wednesday to playing a leadership role in protecting one of the world's busiest shipping routes.

The so-called "New York Declaration" signed by U.S. Deputy Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo and her counterparts from Britain, Cyprus, Japan and Singapore is an attempt to pool resources and agree on the best ways of deterring the Somali pirates who prey on vessels passing between Europe and Asia.

"We realize that the fight against piracy in the Horn of Africa region cannot be solved entirely at sea," DiCarlo said.

Other needed measures, she said, involve nations adopting legal mechanisms to prosecute suspected pirates and Somalia improving its capacity to police its own territory.

Though it is a nonbinding political document, proponents say it will commit ship registry nations to adopt "best management practices" for ship security such as increased lookouts, raised ladders and emergency fire pumps readied to repel boarders.

It was first proposed in May by Panama, the Bahamas, Liberia and the Marshall Islands, four of the world's biggest ship registries. Those nations signed the declaration previously.

In Washington, Andrew Shapiro, the assistant secretary of state for political-military affairs, told the ComDef 2009

defense policy conference on Wednesday that the document represents what Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has called "a 21st century solution to the 17th century problem" of piracy.

Clinton said during a visit in August to Nairobi, Kenya, that the U.S. would provide more aid for Somalia, which is home to terrorists, drug smugglers and Islamist extremists.

By signing, the United States says the Coast Guard and U.S. shipping companies will continue adopting measures to protect themselves against piracy that comply with the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code.

A group of almost 40 nations and international organizations including the U.S., China, Britain and France planned to gather Thursday at U.N.

## Lawyers: Uighurs agree to go to Palau

JONATHAN KAMINSKY

Associated Press Writer

KOROR, Palau (AP) — Three Chinese Muslims imprisoned for years at the U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay have agreed to be released to the tiny Pacific nation of Palau, their lawyers told The Associated Press.

The deals struck with U.S. officials this week are the first among a group of 13 Uighur detainees at Guantanamo who have been offered relocation to Palau under President Barack Obama's plans to close the controversial prison in Cuba. Negotiations are continuing with the rest of the group.

Relocating the Uighurs would bring the Obama administration a step closer to its goal of finding new homes for terrorism suspects and others captured in Afghanistan who have been cleared of wrongdoing but cannot go home for fear of persecution. But it has also raised tension with Beijing, which regards the inmates as terrorist suspects and wants them returned to China.

George Clarke, the lawyer for two of the Uighurs, Dawut Abdurehim and Anwar Assan, said they had both recently formally accepted Washington's offer to relocate them to Palau. Eric Tirschwell, the lawyer for four other Uighurs at Guantanamo, said one of his clients had also accepted the offer.

"They're excited," Clarke told The Associated Press by telephone from Washington. "They want to get the heck out of Guantanamo Bay. They look forward to getting to Palau and getting on with their lives."

A State Department official in Washington, speaking on condition of anonymity because talks with other Uighurs are continuing,

confirmed "some of the Uighur detainees have agreed to resettlement in Palau" but declined to give details. Uighurs who have accepted the relocation offer could be transferred to Palau as soon as October, Clarke said.

The 13 Uighurs (pronounced WEE'-gurs), Turkic Muslims from far western China, have been held by the United States since their capture in Afghanistan and Pakistan in 2001. The Pentagon determined last year they were not "enemy combatants," but they have been in legal limbo ever since.

Mark Bezner, the top American official in Palau, said Wednesday he had not yet received formal notification on the Uighurs. "Perhaps we'll get a confirmation in the next couple of days from Washington," he said.

Tirschwell declined to reveal which of his clients has agreed to the deal, but said "he's looking forward to enjoying the freedom that he deserves and that he's been denied for almost eight years." The lawyers also declined to give details of agreements struck with U.S. officials. Of the 10 other Uighur detainees remaining at the U.S. military base in Cuba, none have ruled out moving to Palau. Attorneys representing the other men declined to comment or did not return messages left by AP.

Palau, a developing country of 200,000 that is dependent on U.S. development funds, in June offered to take the Uighurs at Guantanamo. Palau's President Johnson Toribiong told the AP at the time that some of the men were concerned about his country's relative proximity to China — it lies about 500 miles (800 kilometers) east of the Philippines. U.S. officials insisted they would be safe there. □



U.S. Adm. Gary Roughead, chief of U.S. Naval Operations, right, listens during a discussion with journalists Sunday, Aug. 23, 2009, at the Navy base in Manama, Bahrain. Roughead said he has faith multinational forces are able to effectively combat piracy, which has plagued commercial shipping off the northeastern coast of Africa.

headquarters in New York for their fourth major session on deterring Somali piracy.

They are meeting to discuss how best to coordinate international naval patrols and other security measures and how to discourage the secretive payments to pirates who often demand — and receive — multimillion dollar ransoms.

Another item drawing attention is cooperation on interdiction and prosecution of suspected pirates.

Somalia's lawless coastline and 18-year civil war makes

it a haven for pirates. Sailors typically are released from their captured vessels only after payment of a ransom. Somali pirates captured more than 100 ships last year, and attacks have increased this year.

DiCarlo said there have been 138 pirate attacks off the Horn of Africa so far this year, of which 33 have succeeded. But the safety practices that the U.S. and other nations are promoting "contributed to preventing many of the other criminal assaults from succeeding," she said. □

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En México:

# Pastor boliviano secuestra avión

MEXICO (AP) - El gobierno federal responsabilizó el miércoles a un boliviano supuesto pastor religioso del secuestro de un avión de Aeroméxico con 103 pasajeros, y quien dijo haber sido motivado por una revelación divina.

El secretario de Seguridad Pública federal, Genaro García Luna, identificó en rueda de prensa a José Mar Flores Pereira, de 44 años y originario de Santa Cruz, Bolivia, como el autor del secuestro del Boeing 737 procedente del balneario turístico de Cancún.

“El refiere que fue una revelación divina lo que lo condujo a esta acción”, comentó el secretario. Añadió que Flores Pereira dijo a la policía que como el miércoles era el día 9 del mes 9 del año 09, eso representaba el 999, que si era visto al revés implicaba el número 666, una referencia bíblica al anticristo.

García Luna dijo que en medio del vuelo 576 entre Cancún y la ciudad de



El avión de Aeroméxico que fue secuestrado por al menos cinco desconocidos estacionado en el aeropuerto de la ciudad de México, el miércoles 9 de septiembre de 2009. (AP foto/Gregory Bull)

México, el hombre advirtió a una azafata que tenía una bomba, que era acompañado por tres cómplices y que haría explotar la aeronave.

Al preguntarle quiénes eran sus cómplices, respondió: “el padre, el hijo y el espíritu santo”. En declaraciones posteriores a la prensa, Flores Pereira dijo que el artefacto con el que amenazó hacer

volar el avión “era una lata de Jumex (marca mexicana de jugos), que le puse unas lucecitas”.

El boliviano, que vive en México desde hace 17 años y a quien las autoridades describieron como drogadicto y alcohólico, tenía antecedentes penales en Bolivia. El hombre pidió sobrevolar el aeropuerto de la capital siete veces y

hablar con el presidente Felipe Calderón.

El funcionario federal dijo que tras revisar el equipaje de la aeronave se descubrió que el boliviano portaba un falso artefacto explosivo.

Imágenes de televisión mostraron al menos a cinco personas que eran escoltadas por policías federales hacia un vehículo blindado, luego

de una operación en la que tomaron control del avión y en la que no se hizo ningún disparo.

García explicó que varios pasajeros que viajaban en la parte posterior de la aeronave fueron escoltados hasta el final, como parte de un protocolo de seguridad y en un intento por evitar que algún otro presunto criminal tratara de pasar desapercibido.

El avión partió antes del mediodía de Cancún y tras llegar a la capital mexicana, permaneció en una sección especial de la terminal aérea por más de una hora hasta que las autoridades controlaron la situación. Todos los pasajeros y tripulantes fueron evacuados a salvo.

El secretario de Seguridad Pública dijo que el boliviano había partido cinco días atrás a Cancún, donde dijo que “quería participar en actividades de emancipación y difusión de religión”. El hombre radicaba en el estado sureño de Oaxaca. □

## Cuba autoriza a Correos a proveer internet

LA HABANA (AP) - El gobierno cubano autorizó a la oficina de correos a prestar servicio de internet para la población, pero hasta ahora la normativa no fue puesta en práctica.

La empresa postal se convirtió mediante una resolución gubernamental en “proveedor de Servicios de Acceso a Internet al Público, los cuales deberá prestar a personas a personas naturales en el territorio nacional”.

El documento fue firmado en junio por el ministro del rubro, Ramiro Valdés, y colocado recientemente en la página de la red de la Gaceta Oficial.

Correos tiene sucursales con salas de navegación Intranet, o sea una red doméstica donde incluso se habilita a las personas una cuenta a su nombre para mandar o recibir misivas del extranjero; pero no podían visitar la red de redes global.

Un recorrido de AP realizado por sucursales de Correos que tienen salas de navegación Intranet mostraron que todavía la resolución no se aplicó.

A partir de la resolución, la empresa postal realizaría además de sus funciones tradicionales de envío de cartas, paquetes y telegramas entre otros, la misma operación que se permite a los hoteles donde sus huéspedes --nacionales o extranjeros-- usan internet, aunque los precios son elevados. □

## Opositores venezolanos piden apoyo internacional

CARACAS (AP) - Los partidos opositores solicitaron el miércoles apoyo internacional para enfrentar lo que consideraron el “deterioro de la democracia” en Venezuela y “persecución” judicial a los críticos del gobierno. Un grupo de dirigentes acudió a las embajadas de Panamá, Perú, Colombia, Canadá y Brasil en la capital para consignar un documento en el que piden a los gobiernos extranjeros que sean “perennes observadores” de la situación venezolana.

Achacan la situación prevaleciente a “la concentración de poder y autoritarismo creciente ejercido por el presidente” Hugo Chávez. Los partidos opositores, aglutinados en la “Mesa de Unidad Democrática”, denunciaron en el documento que “en los últimos meses, el gobierno de Venezuela se encuentra desarrollando una inaceptable arremetida contra las instituciones democráticas, manifestada a través del acoso, la amenaza, la intimidación y la persecución política de la oposición”.

Asimismo plantearon que en Venezuela hay

una “falta absoluta de independencia de los poderes del estado”, y un “escaso respeto por las leyes y la Constitución”.

El subsecretario general del partido Acción Democrático, Silverio Figueroa, dijo a la prensa, al arribar a la sede de la embajada de Colombia en Caracas, que la oposición venezolana espera que la comunidad internacional “se solidarice... que sean vigilantes de que aquí en Venezuela no se vaya a instaurar en definitiva una dictadura”.

Las detenciones del prefecto de Caracas y presidente del partido Alianza al Bravo Pueblo, Richard Blanco, y de 12 manifestantes entre los que se incluye el dirigente estudiantil, Julio César Rivas, y 11 empleados de la Alcaldía Metropolitana de Caracas, han sido criticadas por la oposición que acusa al gobierno de haber emprendido un “fusilamiento judicial” de los adversarios.

El gobierno y la Fiscalía General han desestimado los cuestionamientos de la oposición y han asegurado que las detenciones están ajustadas a la ley. □





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Because no Parilla is complete without a magnificent bottle of red wine, your server can recommend a spectacular choice from the extensive wine list.

And speaking of Sizzle, the Succulent Steaks aren't the only things that sizzle nightly. The Tango Argentine Parilla hosts Live Music where the ambiance is hotter than ever.

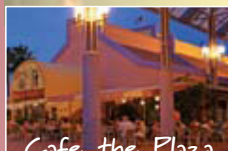
Tango Argentine Parilla is located in ARAWAK GARDENS in the high rise hotel section.

**www.tangoaruba.com**

**Open Nightly 5pm until 11pm**

**Located at the Arawak Garden**

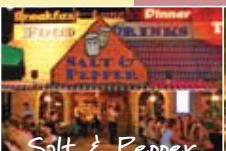
**Reservations are Suggested. Telephone 586 - 8600**



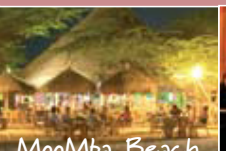
Café the Plaza



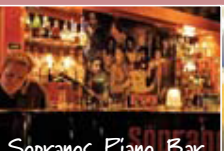
Tango Argentine Grill



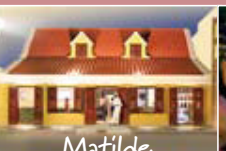
Salt & Pepper



MooMba Beach



Sopranos Piano Bar



Matilde



Mambo Jambo



Hadicurari

**Café the Plaza**  
(at Renaissance Marketplace, Downtown)  
International Cuisine  
Phone: 583-8826  
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Daily Live music.  
A Dutch style restaurant with moderate prices  
Open from  
10.00 am - 01.00 am  
7 days a week  
[www.cafetheplaza.com](http://www.cafetheplaza.com)

**Tango Argentine Grill**  
(at Arawak Garden, High Rise Hotels)  
International Cuisine and Charcoal Grill  
Phone: 586-8600  
Dinner and Daily Live Music. World famous Argentine beef prepared on open charcoal grill.  
Open from  
5.00 pm - 11.00 pm  
7 days a week  
[www.tangoaruba.com](http://www.tangoaruba.com)

**Salt & Pepper**  
(at Arawak Garden, High Rise Hotels)  
International Cuisine and Tapas  
Phone: 586-3280  
Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner. Daily Live music by local artists and bands on our large terrace.  
Open from  
7.00 am - 01.00 am  
7 days a week  
[www.saltandpepperaruba.com](http://www.saltandpepperaruba.com)

**MooMba Beach**  
(between Holiday Inn & Marriott Surf Club)  
International Cuisine  
Phone: 586-5365  
Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner and Daily Live Music. Enjoy dinner by torch light... barefoot on the beach. Open from  
7.00 am - 11.00 pm  
Bar open from  
10.00 am - 01.00 am  
[www.moombabeach.com](http://www.moombabeach.com)

**Sopranos Piano Bar**  
(at Arawak Garden, High Rise Hotels)  
Bar with Live Entertainment  
Phone: 586-8622  
Extensive Cocktail menu. Daily live music, request your favorite songs and sing along! Open from  
5.00 pm - 01.00 am  
7 days a week  
[www.sopranospianobar.com](http://www.sopranospianobar.com)

**Matilde Restaurant**  
(Downtown)  
International Cuisine  
AAA/4 Diamond Award  
Phone: 583-9200  
Lunch and Dinner  
A refined dining experience.  
Restaurant open from  
11.30 am - 11.00 pm  
7 days a week  
[www.matildearuba.com](http://www.matildearuba.com)

**Mambo Jambo Latin Bar & Grill**  
(Royal Plaza Downtown)  
International & Latin Cuisine  
Phone: 583-3632  
Lunch, Dinner, Live Bands, Salsa Dancing, Great food and good music 7 days a week. Restaurant open from  
11.00 am - 09.00 pm,  
Bar open from  
11.00 am - 04.00 am  
[www.mambojamboaruba.com](http://www.mambojamboaruba.com)

**Hadicurari Restaurant**  
(between MooMba Beach and Marriott Surf Club)  
International and Seafood Cuisine  
Phone: 586-2288  
Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner  
'Seafood with a view'  
Restaurant open from  
8.00 am - 11.00 pm  
7 days a week  
[www.hadicurari.com](http://www.hadicurari.com)



[WWW.ARUBAWINEANDDINE.COM](http://WWW.ARUBAWINEANDDINE.COM)

